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ABSTRACT

This book examines change, leadership, and resilience, including levels of change, what constitutes effective leadership, and characteristics of organizational resilience. It describes ways to build organizational resilience and describes 12 harsh realities that people and organizations bring to reform, such as the reality that most people act first in their own self-interest, not in the interest of the organization; that most people engage in organizational change because of their own pain, not because of the merits of the change; and that most organizations engage in long-term change with short-term leadership. Each of these realities is illustrated by an example, and the leadership implications of the reality are detailed. The text discusses ways to heighten individual resilience in others, to determine where people are in relation to change, to help people move from where they are to where they need to be, and to provide caring, clarity, choice, and hope. The volume also details ways to maintain personal resilience, the special anatomy of leadership pain, and increasing leaders' resilience. (RJM)

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PREFACE

As you might have guessed from its title, this book about leadership and change is different.

Typically, such books discuss the necessary skills and strategies leaders will need in the 21st century, and include an optimistic set of steps deemed necessary to bring about systemic change. Educators take the list seriously, apply the steps as outlined, and wonder months or even years later what went wrong. Which steps weren't carried out properly? What could have been done differently along the way to increase the odds for success?

But this book takes a fundamentally different approach. The centerpiece of the book is a dozen bold, even bald, realities about people and organizations—bold because the realities won't be enthusiastically embraced; bald because the realities lay bare for public exposure things we secretly know and experience but don't talk about. These realities, stated as propositions, are intended to openly stir intense dialogue and debate within each reader and among all education leaders.

The truth is, this book may be hazardous to your optimism, but it will increase your hope. Vaclav Havel (Nichols 1997) defines optimism as the belief that things will turn out as you would like. Hope, on the other hand, is a belief in yourself that causes you to fight for what is right and just regardless of the consequences. So when it comes to confronting the harsh realities of leading change, this book is long on hope, which it offers through strategies education leaders can use to build resilience within themselves and in their colleagues and organizations. By acknowledging these harsh realities, we as leaders can help others become more resilient. Equally important, we will become more resilient ourselves as we shift away from spending our scarce energy on suppressing the influence of the realities and move toward leading important change in the face of the realities.

So, clearly, this book about leadership is different. It calls for honest, candid discussion about the harsh realities leaders face when trying to create more resilient organizations. The realities don't paint a very optimistic picture about successfully leading change. But acknowledging them does offer hope to leaders who believe strongly that what they are doing is right.

PART ONE

CHANGE, LEADERSHIP, AND RESILIENCE

One thing that sets this book apart from others about leadership and change is how the concepts of systemic change, effective leadership, and organizational resilience are defined and applied. These concepts are particularly important because of the rapid, accelerating pace of change we are all experiencing. When groups of educators are asked to list all the changes that have affected them professionally over the past three years, they fill pages of chart paper. When asked to compare the past with the volume of change they expect during the next three years, virtually everyone agrees that the pace will increase. Therefore, it is more critical than ever for school leaders to understand the meaning of systemic change, the leader's role in successfully guiding an organization through systemic change, and the strategies required to develop more resilient organizations.

Levels of Change

SYSTEMIC CHANGE

Organizational change is best thought of in terms of three concentric circles. As shown in Figure 1.1, the inner circle represents *systemic change.* It is no accident that systemic change is at the center; it is powerful and organic. Systemic change affects the norms, values, and power relationships throughout an organization.

To effect long-term, meaningful change, leaders need to focus on systemic changes. For example, many schools across the country now claim to operate as middle schools. However, the norms, values, and power relationships within the schools remain basically unchanged from the junior high model. Adults still view children as

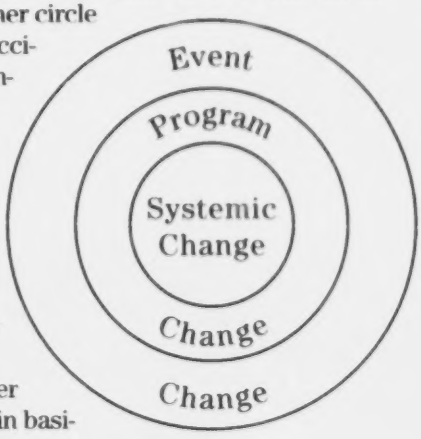


Figure 1.1: Levels of Change

junior high school students and the teaching-learning process operates accordingly. Therefore, despite good intentions, systemic change has not occurred.

Systemic change happens only when the people inside a school critically examine their fundamental organizational beliefs and change their practices to fit their revised beliefs. For educators in a school or district to truly achieve systemic change related to the middle school philosophy, they must first believe that students in the middle grades have educational needs that distinguish them from 4th graders and 10th graders. Teachers must then construct learning environments that capitalize on cooperative learning, personalized attention, integrated curriculum across subject areas, and other innovations reflective of the idea that middle school students are not just *junior* high school students. And the power relationships within the school must be altered to reflect the new norms and values. Real systemic change is achieved only when school leaders and other educators examine and alter the beliefs, norms, and power relationships within a school or district.

PROGRAM CHANGE

The next layer of change is *program change.* This level of change affects the norms and values of segments of the organization without having a major impact on the organization *qua* organization. School-within-a-school programs at the high school level are designed around core beliefs about teaching and learning. However, the beliefs often apply to only a segment of the student population and are embraced only by a fraction of the teachers. This illustrates program change. The Reading Recovery program, which assists 1st grade students with severe reading needs, is another example of program change. The program can be conducted without a shift in norms, values, or power relationships throughout the school or district.

In many instances, program change is the result of intended systemic change at the school level that never takes hold across the entire school but that pockets of teachers strongly believe in and manage to act on. This situation is found in the research conducted on schools participating in the Coalition for Essential Schools. The Coalition was founded in 1984 by Theodore Sizer to focus on systemic reform in selected schools throughout America. The Coalition's reforms were based on nine principles designed to bring about improved teaching and learning at individual school sites that agreed to participate.

The Coalition founders sought schoolwide change. What they have achieved thus far is somewhat different. In most Coalition schools no consensus existed that fundamental changes in school structure or teaching practices needed to occur, even after the schools agreed to participate according to the fundamental beliefs underlying the Coalition's philosophy.

A core group of faculty members at most of the schools became active in their school's reform efforts, but their efforts often ended up dividing the faculty (Muncey and McQuillan 1993). In other words, what was intended to be systemic change throughout the school turned out to be significant change in some teachers' programs.

EVENT CHANGE

The outer layer of the concentric circles is *event change.* This level of change has no lasting impact on the norms, values, or power relationships in any part of the system. It is simply an event in the life of a school or district with little connection to the history or the future of the organization.

Many attempts at systemic change result only in event change. School leaders move boxes around on the organizational chart with the very best of intentions to achieve systemic change, but the people represented by each box continue to operate as they always have. Similarly, school leaders, determined to show that their schools aren't standing still, grab the hottest topics in education journals, but, with limited time for staff development and implementation for teachers, the core beliefs related to the concepts often don't become fully understood or enthusiastically supported. What starts out as an attempt at systemic change ends up as just another in a long line of events.

* * *

In summary, systemic change is what leaders most often strive for and expect because this level of change has the greatest impact on the organization's norms, values, and power relationships. Most of the time, however, change initiatives do not go beyond the program or event level, falling short of the hopes of those committed to stretching the organization to new heights through the change process.

Effective Leadership

To lead is to influence others to achieve mutually agreed upon and socially valued goals that help an organization stretch to a higher level. For the most part, this definition sounds like standard rhetoric . . . but with one exception. Leadership, in this context, emphasizes *helping the organization stretch to a higher level.* Neither event change nor program change meets the test of leading an organization to a higher level. Leading does not mean moving people through time in a status quo environment. That's management. Or bossing. Or maybe something else. But unless the organization becomes mobilized to go beyond where it currently sits, leadership isn't happening (Patterson 1993).

To lead an organization beyond the *status quo*, leaders must confront the realities about people and organizations that mitigate against systemic change. Doing so injects tension into the system, which can be uncomfortable, but only leaders who can capitalize on the organizational energy created by this tension and use it constructively to lead systemic change will truly be effective.

Organizational Resilience

In plain language, resilience is the ability to recover from or adapt to change. Applied to organizations, resilience refers to the capacity of an organization and its individual members to absorb change without draining organizational and individual energy. To understand this concept, imagine that everyone has a personal *energy account*. This account contains energy, in the form of time, thoughts, and effort, which people must spend on:

- daily living at work;
- assimilating significant change into their lives at work;
- daily living outside of work; and
- assimilating significant change into their lives outside of work.

For organizational leaders, this formula is critical to understanding the price people pay for change. This energy account, after all, is not reserved exclusively for the organization. People must invest energy in their personal lives as well as their professional lives; making ongoing withdrawals from their energy accounts to live their daily lives and to be productive at work. Unless the spiral of ongoing withdrawals is broken, personal energy accounts become depleted in the face of the universal constant—change.

People can do two things to break the downward spiral and, therefore, become more resilient. They can increase the energy points they have available to spend on change initiatives, and they can decrease the energy points needed to absorb any particular change (Conner 1993).

The leader's role is to continually look for ways to help the overall organizational culture, as well as the individuals within the culture, strengthen the skills needed to adapt to change and thus remain resilient during change.

* * *

An understanding of each of the individual concepts of systemic change, effective leadership, and organizational resilience significantly affects how people view leading change. Together, these concepts profoundly influence how organizational leaders can successfully create resilient organizations in the face of nonstop change.

PART TWO

BUILDING ORGANIZATIONAL RESILIENCE: A DOZEN HARSH REALITIES

Historically, schools leaders have proceeded with the best of intentions to build resilient organizations. Unfortunately, they have often operated from the following misguided, though attractive, assumptions when trying to effect change:

- People act first in the best interests of the organization
- People want to understand the *what* and *why* of organizational change
- People engage in change because of the merits of the change
- People opt to be architects of the change affecting them
- Organizations are rationally functioning systems
- Organizations are wired to assimilate systemic change
- Organizations operate from a value-driven orientation
- Organizations can effect long-term, systemic change even with short-term leadership
- Organizations can achieve systemic change without creating conflict in the system

Operating from these faulty assumptions, leaders have applied faulty strategies and, therefore, unintentionally created a huge drain on organizational resilience.

I propose the following list of ways leaders implementing change need to think about people and organizations—a dozen harsh realities—as the basis for creating more resilient organizations.

A Dozen Harsh Realities

REALITIES ABOUT PEOPLE

Reality #1	Most people act first in their own self-interest, not in the interests of the organization
Reality #2	Most people don't want to genuinely understand the *what* and *why* of organizational change
Reality #3	Most people engage in organizational change because of their own pain, not because of the merits of the change
Reality #4	Most people expect to be viewed as having good intentions, even though they view with suspicion the intentions of those initiating organizational change
Reality #5	Most people opt to be victims of change rather than architects of change

REALITIES ABOUT ORGANIZATIONS

Reality #6	Most organizations operate nonrationally rather than rationally
Reality #7	Most organizations are wired to protect the status quo
Reality #8	Most organizations initiate change with an event-driven rather than value-driven mentality
Reality #9	Most organizations engage in long-term change with short-term leadership
Reality #10	Most organizations expect the greatest amount of change with the least amount of conflict

REALITIES ABOUT PEOPLE AND ORGANIZATIONS

Reality #11	Most people and organizations deny that the other 10 realities are, in fact, their own reality
Reality #12	Most people and organizations *do* have the capacity to develop resilience in the face of the other 11 realities

Most people reading this list for the first time find it intriguing, but a bit jarring. It's important to remember that each of the realities is intended to reflect a generalization about *most people* or *most organizations.* Clearly, we can all think of people—you and me, for instance—who are exceptions to each statement on the list. Our natural tendency, then, is to argue that because of the exceptions we can so readily recite, the statements aren't valid. But they are, and they make us confront realities that have been documented by nearly four decades of serious study about educational change (including Fullan 1991, Goodlad 1984, Sarason 1996). Denying these realities because we know of exceptions is simply making an excuse for not doing some of the difficult things we must do to effect change.

If we are truly interested in helping our organizations stretch to new heights, we must examine each of these realities, determine how each plays out in our own organizations, and implement leadership strategies that allow us to use the tensions created by each as a fulcrum for leveraging change.

Realities About People

REALITY #1:
Most people act first in their own self-interest, not in the interests of the organization

When people feel the winds of change blowing across an organization, the natural response is to say, "What's in it for me? How will I benefit? Why should I change?" (Block 1987). The nature of these concerns has been documented by researchers Hall and Loucks (1978), who found that people respond predictably to proposed organizational change. First, they want to know, at a surface level, what the change is about. Next, they move to the personal stage of concern and demand to know how this so-called change will affect them and their professional space. And third comes what Hall and Loucks call the management stage of concern, which is characterized by questions such as, "How can I possibly fit this into a crowded workday?" and "What will I have to give up that I currently like in order to manage this new change?"

Hall and Loucks note that people express concerns about the interests of the organization only *after* they satisfactorily resolve their self-interests. And some people never move beyond the personal and management stages of concern.

It is human nature for people to think first of themselves, and acknowledging that does not cast a dark shadow on the nature of people. Acting first out of self-interest does not mean people are selfish or disloyal to the organization. It reflects people's need to conserve their scarce energy points. People can't afford to automatically rally around every change initiative anyone in the organization dreams up. To maintain any sense of resilience in the face of change, individuals must spend their energy on initiatives that have a payoff for them.

REALITY #1 IN ACTION*

In a suburban West Coast high school, a group returns from a two-day conference on block scheduling. The group has become convinced that students will benefit from spending more concentrated blocks of time in a single subject and that teachers will benefit from cooperatively designing lessons around integrated themes of instruction. In typical fashion, the fired-up group marches into the principal's office, presents their case, and asks for time on the next faculty agenda to present their findings. Reluctantly, the principal agrees.

* *Reality in Action scenarios reflect a composite of reality across many school districts.*

At the faculty meeting, the block scheduling advocates request the chance to form a study committee and return to the faculty with recommendations within 90 days. Their request is met with a mixture of concern and apathy. However, no one actually speaks out against the idea, so a committee is formed. Curiously, the committee is made up primarily of administrators, the conference group, and English and social studies teachers.

As far as most faculty members know, the topic lay dormant for 90 days. Then it abruptly resurfaces when the committee addresses the faculty with two recommendations: to pilot the block scheduling concept during the upcoming school year and to implement the concept across all subject areas in two years. The recommendations are supported by plenty of evidence from the literature on block scheduling, as well as personal testimony from committee members who had visited schools where block scheduling was being implemented.

Needless to say, a sleeping giant awakes, nick-named self-interest. People in the math department cannot see how their interests will be served; such a plan would disrupt the logical, progressive sequence of math course offerings. The assistant principal in charge of scheduling claims that she cannot possibly make it work. People who teach elective courses worry that too much time would be devoted to required courses. In summary, the faculty members who were not part of the excitement of developing the block scheduling concept ask questions such as: What's wrong with the way we do things now? How is this going to affect me and my department? How can I possibly manage this with everything else the school demands from my time right now?

After much frustration and hurt feelings, the principal calls for a vote on the committee's recommendations. Not surprisingly, the group's recommendations suffer a resounding defeat.

LEADERSHIP IMPLICATIONS

While the natural tendency of individuals is to act in their own self-interest, the logical tendency of those leading change initiatives is to sell change on the basis of how good it will be for the organization.

Change agents assume that if they can rationally build a case for change based on the benefits to the organization, people rationally will embrace the change and everyone will win. In the block scheduling scenario, committee members flooded the meeting with handouts, charts, articles, and testimonials on the merits of block scheduling. They presented a very rational case. However, the audience members were not in a rational mood. They were in an emotional mood.

Instead of building a compelling case for how a school or system will be better off, leaders need to spend much more time upfront understanding the self-interests of the people in the organization. Returning to the block scheduling example, at the committee level, questions such as the following needed to be asked: What will each department lose under the block scheduling concept? How will the plan negatively affect the offering of elective courses? What kinds of headaches will this concept create for the people responsible for scheduling? Who else will be affected by the change?

Once issues of self-interest are acknowledged and carefully considered, leaders of change need to avoid the trap of *either/or* thinking by adopting *and* thinking. In other words, instead of thinking that either the math department gets their way or the committee gets its way, the question needs to be: How can we meet the needs of the math department and also achieve what we need on behalf of the entire school?

By carefully considering self-interest during deliberations about change, leaders can present the organization's case for change in such a way that individuals understand how their self-interests can be met at the same time the organization's interests are fulfilled. Even though the mere thought of addressing the spectrum of individual self-interests found in an organization might seem overwhelming, denial of this reality creates barriers to change that are much more insurmountable.

REALITY #2:
Most people don't want to genuinely understand the *what* and *why* of organizational change

On the surface, this reality doesn't make much sense. Why would anyone *not* want to understand a proposed change that could affect them? The answer is quite interesting.

Assume, first, that the initiators of change have legitimate, compelling reasons for the need to change. Also assume that the initiators do a compelling job of presenting the case for change. In other words, the evidence is conclusive; the need to change is inescapable. If people in the organization acknowledge that the reasons are compelling and that they fully understand them, then they are left with few compelling reasons not to change. So, given people's natural inclination not to want to change, how can they publicly escape the power of reason when privately they seek the status quo? They simply profess to not understand. For example, as long as principals don't quite understand what the superintendent is talking about, they don't have any obligations to buy into a proposed change. Logically, it wouldn't make sense to ask principals to support something that still seems ambiguous or confusing to them. So the people who are the targets of change make sure the responsibility for achieving thorough understanding about the change rests exclusively with the change initiator.

REALITY #2 IN ACTION

The newly appointed superintendent of an urban district on the East Coast inherits a very traditional central office organizational structure. She finds that the system is top-heavy with central office specialists. After several months of careful observations, the superintendent concludes that people throughout the organization have learned over time to become dependent on the central office specialists. In other words, social studies teachers are encouraged by the central office to defend the territory of social studies. Teachers of the talented and gifted are urged to think only in terms of teaching those who have been labeled accordingly. The supervisor of talented and gifted staff even conveys to those he supervises that if his position is eliminated, there will be no one left in the central office to advocate for them or for their students.

The superintendent has a different idea about the role of central office staff. She believes that central office staff members should serve as generalists, offering direct support to teachers by providing information and resources to help all teachers. She believes that the current vertical organizational structure rein-

forces a too narrow view of subject areas as the basis for organizing teaching and learning. She also knows that two years earlier, the school board approved a position paper for the district that called for an instructional emphasis on core values of integrated instruction across subject areas, plus thematic curriculum incorporating cooperative teaching and learning. Given this position, the superintendent develops her own concept paper centered on two questions: How can we best use the talent in central office to reinforce our beliefs about multidisciplinary curriculum and instruction? And how can we become instructional generalists instead of subject area specialists, especially given that our classroom teachers are specialists already?

The superintendent distributes the concept paper at an all-administrators meeting, spends about an hour outlining her position, then asks for group questions. Aside from two rather benign questions, the group is silent. The superintendent interprets the lack of questions to mean that people at least understand the concepts in the paper, though she knows that not everyone supports the idea.

Once the meeting is over, the central office staff privately start to organize their teachers. In meetings quickly called by the subject area supervisors, the basic response is to claim complete confusion over this new concept and to search for the plan's possible weaknesses rather than its strengths. We don't understand where this plan came from. We don't understand how it will work. We don't understand who will supervise subject area teachers if subject area supervisors have to do something else. We don't understand what will happen to academic standards if academic supervisory positions disappear from the organizational chart. We don't understand how we can hire quality subject area teachers if subject area supervisors don't make those decisions. In short, we just don't understand!

In addition to the private meetings, large contingents of subject area teachers begin bombarding board members publicly with the same questions. At one board meeting, teachers fill the auditorium and, for nearly two hours during the public comment session, demand answers to a barrage of questions they fire at anyone who will listen. Those who reject the central office changes repeatedly implore the board not to accept the superintendent's recommendations until everyone affected has a thorough understanding of the issues raised. In short, people say they would change if, and only if, they thoroughly understood how this newly hatched idea would affect them and help their students.

LEADERSHIP IMPLICATIONS

Employees professing to not understand is both a systems issue and an individual issue.

From a systems perspective, leaders often fail to recognize the distinctions between *receiving* and *understanding* communication. Leaders can convey information and employees can receive it without any real understanding taking place. Authentic understanding does not occur until employees attach *personal* meaning to the leader's message.

Leaders must also be aware of communication gaps in the system. It is often difficult to trace where the communication channels break down. In our example scenario, subject area teachers received the message sent by the superintendent as filtered through the lens of the subject area supervisors. The intended meaning of the message was most likely altered when interpreted by the supervisors.

A third leadership implication stems from the issue of burden of proof. Individuals reason that as long as the system fails to communicate anticipated changes and accompanying expectations, they cannot be held responsible for fulfilling the expectations. To overcome the major burden of proving that organizational change was effectively communicated, change initiators must shift significant responsibility for understanding back to those receiving the information about change. The superintendent in our example scenario, after extensive efforts in using multiple forms and forums for communication, should have conveyed very directly to the supervisors that ample time and effort had been expended describing the proposed change and that the time had come for those who still didn't understand to individually declare what they didn't understand and what they needed in order to reach full understanding. This request for what people still need from the system should provide the superintendent with insights about the gaps in understanding throughout the organization, so that appropriate strategies can be designed to close those gaps.

The superintendent also needed to clearly state that, at that point, it was patently unacceptable for supervisors to not know what issues were still unclear to them. And as a final step, the superintendent should have assigned a timeline for the confused supervisors to assume responsibility for closing the gaps in understanding and should have explained that failure to do so would be considered a performance issue. By acknowledging people's natural tendency to profess confusion about change, leaders can implement strategies to ensure that everyone has the necessary information and time to fully understand the whats and whys associated with proposed change.

REALITY #3:
Most people engage in organizational change because of their own pain, not because of the merits of the change

In a rational world, people change because it is the right thing to do. In graduate school, education leaders-to-be study models like Havelock's (1995) seven stages of planned change and then apply their learning to real-life situations. When the leaders sense resistance to the proposed change, they try talking louder, longer, and with more conviction to sell the audience on the merits of the change. Unfortunately, they are selling the wrong thing.

A significant majority of individuals won't embrace change based on its merits, but rather because of their own pain (Conner 1993). In other words, individuals need more than to hear a strong argument for the merits of change; they need to weigh the pain of changing against the pain of clinging to the status quo. The pain of clinging to the status quo can take the form of a missed opportunity, a problem left unresolved, or a dilemma not effectively managed. Therefore, people need to confront a series of questions: What will our organizational life be like five years from now if we continue to do business as usual? How painful will it be? What will life be like if we do accept the proposed changes? Will the short-term pain of changing be less than the long-term pain of holding on to how we currently do business? Candid responses to these questions help people understand how a proposed change, even with the inevitable discomfort, will be worth the effort.

REALITY #3 IN ACTION

As part of the Goals 2000 legislation, the federal government invites each school district to submit a proposal for technology funding. The school board in one rural Southern district knows that the district could receive approximately $100,000, which could be used to acquire computers that, according to the superintendent, the district desperately needs. But there is a problem. The school board is conservative and strongly resists innovations not clearly proven to raise test scores. On at least three occasions during the past year, the board has rejected various proposals from the superintendent to equip all schools with computer labs, arguing each time that district money should be spent on higher priorities. Though conditions have changed because the money will not have to come from the district budget, the superintendent still fears that the school board will decide not to apply for the funding.

The superintendent decides to try a different approach than he has tried previously when arguing the case for equipping the schools

with computers. Instead of using his typical, rational approach of showing the board data about how important computer technology will be to tomorrow's graduates, he writes a lengthy memo to the board a week before the monthly meeting. In it, he acknowledges the reasons board members have previously given for not launching the district into the world of technology. But then he asks each board member to ponder the following series of questions: What are the chances we can find $100,000 in our own budget within the next five years even to equip the schools with computers? How will you explain to those who elected you that you passed up an opportunity that may not come along again to secure funds? What will you say to the Rotary Club next Tuesday about why you turned down possible funds during a period of scarcity in the district?

When the Goals 2000 funding item comes up for discussion at the board meeting, each board member launches into a little speech about why now *is* the time for the district to become more computer literate. Each speech is a somewhat feeble attempt by the board members to show that they have suddenly seen the need for technology. In reality, the board's change of heart came about because the superintendent made it clear to the board members that the pain associated with accepting the funds would be less than the pain they would experience when having to explain, at election time, why they passed up $100,000 in "free" money.

LEADERSHIP IMPLICATIONS

Leaders must resist the natural temptation to sell proposed change using rational discourse. Instead they must sell the need to change by exposing the pain that will result from not changing. Leaders need to help people see the urgency for change. Tichy and Charan (1995) call this sense of urgency "the burning platform theory of change." A leader's job is to help people see that the platform is burning, whether the flames are visible or not. The platform can take the form of an opportunity that needs to be seized *now*, a problem that needs to be solved *now*, or a dilemma that needs to be managed *now*.

If the situation represents an opportunity to be seized, leaders need to help members of the organization realize the price to be paid for inaction. In the Goals 2000 scenario, the superintendent abandoned his usual approach of selling the issue from a logical, rational perspective. Instead, he created a burning platform, a sense of urgency for securing the funds. He appealed to the "personal pain perspective" by helping board members see how voters might react at election time to their refusal to take advantage of a small window of opportunity that may never come along again.

This Goals 2000 scenario illustrates the situation of exposing the pain

that would result from a missed opportunity. Leaders also face the almost daily challenge of solving problems. When the pressing condition is a chance to resolve a burning platform organizational problem, leaders need to make sure others have the information and tools to understand the long-term pain of failing to rid the organization of a nagging irritation, thus letting a current problem grow bigger. For example, a school district can "control" expenses in the short run by not making needed repairs to schools. After about 10 years of so-called cost controls, though, the district will face a facilities crisis that is literally out of control. The leader's job is to keep this big picture view in plain sight.

Occasionally leaders also find themselves asking the organization to make a systems change for the purpose of damage control. Such change doesn't appear to do anything to advance the organization toward a better future, but it does reduce the organizational energy spent on controlling an issue. When the organization is spending too much time messing with dilemmas that, by definition, don't have satisfactory answers, leaders face the challenge of convincing employees that the implications of bringing about change will be worth the price of changing. If employees realize that leaving the dilemma unmanaged will be a constant pain for them, usually they will consent to spend the energy necessary to keep things somewhat under control. For instance, a school staff might not want to waste precious time developing a crisis management plan for bomb threats. However, after experiencing the chaos and fear that result from poor planning, the staff will likely agree that the dilemma calls for a concerted schoolwide effort to construct such a plan. The leader's task it to help others see the need to act before a crisis arises.

But what happens when, despite the leaders' best efforts, employees still don't see the need to change? Should leaders move away from the issue, hoping to revisit the topic when the timing is better? Or should they press ahead with changes in the face of massive resistance?

According to Heifetz and Laurie (1997), the answer can be found in two familiar words: *it depends.* It depends primarily on the stakes involved. If the organization's survival as a productive system is at stake, leaders must weigh the price paid now by employees versus the price paid later by a dying organization. Under such circumstances, moving ahead now with the changes is clearly in the best long-range interests of the organization.

If the proposed organizational change means changing frameworks, or paradigms, about how the organization should do business in the future, the burden still will be on the shoulders of the leaders. Most employee groups aren't convinced of the need to jump from today's way of doing business to some untested, ill-defined approach tomorrow. And the harsh reality is that logic alone doesn't work. According to Schlechty (1993), cer-

tain groups won't want to change. Those comfortable with the status quo, the "settlers," have no reason to disrupt what apparently is working for them. And the "saboteurs" believe they have every reason to disrupt whatever is being proposed. Only the risk takers, the group Schlechty calls the "pioneers and explorers," are ready to make the leap of faith. So leaders can turn loose those ready to go and count on the others to make the changes as they see the evidence of success accumulating, or push the stragglers out of the nest and expect them to catch up with those who are blazing the trail. Either way, the organization pays a price for expecting people to change. Leaders have to decide whether it is worth it.

If the proposed changes are just improvements in how the organization does business within the current framework, forced change may not be worth the price paid. Instead leaders may need to rely on time, logic, and teachable moments to help employees move along the continuum of improvement within the system's current way of doing business.

REALITY #4:
Most people expect to be viewed as having good intentions, even though they view with suspicion the intentions of those initiating organizational change

The first half of this reality seems so obvious. Of course people expect to be viewed as having good intentions. Rarely do we encounter people who say to others (or even to themselves), "What I am about to do is based on bad intentions." We all view ourselves and expect others to view us as being trustworthy.

On the flip side, how many times within our own organizations have we heard the following accusations about initiators of change: Do you think we should trust them? What's *really* behind this talk of so-called change? Given what has happened in the past, why should we trust them this time?

So, as ironic as it might seem, when organizational change is proposed, "trustworthy" people who are the targets of change tend to question the trustworthiness of those proposing the change. This doesn't happen with all people and it doesn't happen all of the time, but the harsh reality is that it happens enough to fan the fires of organizational mistrust. And when organizational mistrust of change erupts, the "trustworthy" targets of change dump the burden of proof into the laps of initiators. Consequently, the initiators must prove the trustworthiness of their intentions and try to earn the trust of those being asked to change. [Note: Even more irony gets woven into this mess because the targets of change, the so-called trustworthy ones in a given situation, likely have been initiators of change in another context and, therefore, viewed with mistrust.]

REALITY #4 IN ACTION

A new superintendent is appointed in a progressive Midwestern community of about 9,000 students. He comes with the reputation of being a change agent. People are watching him carefully.

During the summer administrative retreat before the opening of school, the superintendent speaks openly about his image as someone who likes to shake things up. He reassures his new administrative colleagues that he will not initiate any significant changes during his first two years in office; his primary goal is to become familiar with the culture of the school district and to invite anyone, anytime to discuss with him whatever is on the person's mind. "But," he says, "speaking of change, how many of you as principals have been in your same assignment for more than six years?" Seven of 10 hands go up. The superintendent smiles but makes no comment.

About a month later, an elementary school principal takes the superintendent up on his offer to talk. The principal, a high-energy and very progressive thinking individual, says she is getting restless in her position. She has been in the same job for seven years. She thoroughly enjoys her staff and the community is supportive, but she feels as if she isn't growing and inquires about a lateral transfer to another elementary school that will open the following year. The superintendent makes no commitments, but indicates he will give serious consideration to her request.

Three weeks later, another elementary principal becomes seriously ill and takes early retirement. The position is filled temporarily by the assistant principal. So, by October the superintendent is faced with the situation for the following year of having a principalship vacancy in a new school, another vacancy due to illness, and a talented principal who wants a change. The superintendent knows that some action needs to be taken, but he isn't sure exactly what that action ought to be. He discusses the situation with the school board president and confides in one of the middle school principals about the possibility of shifting principals. The principal says she thinks the shifts would be viewed as refreshing.

Over winter break, the superintendent looks at the needs of the schools plus the strengths of the principals and devises a very sensible plan. At the January principals meeting, he presents his ideas and asks for reactions. He gets what he asks for, but not what he expected.

The vocal principals let him know he has violated their trust. They let him know that the word is out that he has been talking secretly with a principal about his scheme to move principals around. They remind him of his promise not to make significant change during the first two years, and they ask why he did not let them know as soon as he began contemplating the shakeup. One veteran principal even comments that it is pretty clear why he has the reputation of being a change agent.

LEADERSHIP IMPLICATIONS

Strengthening Interpersonal Trust. For leaders of change, attacks on trustworthiness can hurt deeply and several reactions are common. Counter attack. Denial of the accusations. Demands for concrete proof of the basis for the accusations.

All of these reactions are, indeed, natural, but they are usually counterproductive. Instead, leaders need to invest their energy in relentlessly avoiding surprises within the organization. Through authentic, frequent, even intentionally redundant communication, they need to forecast any possibility of change and how it directly connects to the bedrock organiza-

tional values. And leaders must assume personal responsibility for demonstrating that the proposed change is anchored to the core direction of the system and that the change rests on the burning platform discussed in Reality #3.

In addition, leaders must examine their own conduct. Fisher and Brown (1988) encourage leaders to think about whether they have possibly given others reason to mistrust by asking themselves the following tough questions about their behavior:

- Has my conduct been in any way erratic? Even with the best of intentions, sometimes changed circumstance will cause leaders to do things that they, themselves, could not have predicted.
- Did I communicate carelessly? Given the numerous meetings leaders attend with groups who have very specific agendas and pointed questions, it's entirely possible to make statements without careful thought to the weight the audience places on them. Leaders sometimes give their best estimate of a situation, while the receivers of the message interpret the comments as a definitive answer.
- Did I treat a promise or commitment lightly? In the example scenario, the superintendent did say he would not initiate significant changes for two years. His "untrustworthiness" stemmed not from deliberate deception, but from differences in the meaning and weight people placed on his promise.
- Did I actually deceive others? Many times, leaders want to spare others the pain of worrying needlessly about proposed change. So when administrators ask a superintendent whether there has been discussion about cuts in central office positions next year, the superintendent may give an ambiguous reply when, indeed, the board had met just the night before in executive session and directed the superintendent to devise a plan for a 10 percent reduction in central office staff. Unfortunately, a little bit of dishonesty or deception creates a lot of mistrust. And it hangs around for a long time.

When leaders find themselves in the predicament of having to answer "yes" to one or more of the above questions, they must be forthright with the answer and pledge to be more vigilant about their behavior in the future. The best leaders can hope for is to be true to themselves in honoring the following public commitment to everyone:

I will do what I say I will do when I say I will do it. And, because I'm human, there will be rare instances when I violate my commitment. In those cases, you have an obligation to tell me immediately, and I have an obligation to demonstrate that it won't happen again.

If we measure trust by our track record of doing what we say we will do when we say we will do it, there is hope for changing people's perceptions about the intentions of our actions. Over time, leaders must establish a track record of repeatedly carrying out, in full view of the organization, the meaning of trust so that others can see the track record being set and comfortably conclude that the leader's intentions are as trustworthy as their own.

Strengthening Organizational Trust. Along with strengthening interpersonal trust, leaders must increase trust in the system. Operationally, this means building into the organization a system of justice that allows people to challenge the conduct or intentions of those at the top of the organizational chart without fear of retribution.

Apart from the typically adversarial grievance process, leaders can create a system that allows teachers, administrators, and other employees to discuss issues surrounding trust in a safe environment. For example, one school district has an Issues Resolution Council for each employee group. On a regular basis, the superintendent meets with representatives of the employee groups to discuss issues or concerns that might be brewing related to mistrust between the employee group and senior management. Over time, leaders can demonstrate that they are serious about wanting to build stronger relationships and open to challenges about their own leadership behavior. In the school district using the Issues Resolution Council concept, the number of formal teacher grievances dropped dramatically over a five-year period. People welcomed an alternative to the formal grievance procedures, knowing they always had the formal process if they needed it.

By strengthening interpersonal and organizational trust, leaders are more likely to be viewed as having good intentions by those w[illegible] they are asking to undertake change.

REALITY #5:
Most people opt to be victims of change rather than architects of change

The literature on educational leadership is replete with calls for employee involvement. Leaders are advised to give employees considerable autonomy in constructing how proposed change initiatives will affect them. Leaders are not advised, however, about what happens next. Employees have a tendency to turn their backs on autonomy and circle their wagons around dependency.

As paradoxical as it may seem, people have a love-hate relationship with autonomy (Block 1987). On the one hand, employees sincerely claim they want to be architects of change that affects them. On the other hand, they fall into the dependency trap of wanting someone to nurture them, someone to care for them, and someone to blame (Conner 1993). Autonomy carries with it responsibility, which translates into being held accountable for one's own action. Dependency carries with it a patriarchal contract, which translates into being protected by those above . . . as long as one does what he or she is told. Given the history of organizations encouraging the patriarchal contract, it is *natural* for employees to choose the safety of being dependent victims of change. It is *unnatural* for them to choose the ambiguity and risk inherent in being held accountable as architects shaping how change affects them.

REALITY #5 IN ACTION

An elementary school principal has been in her assignment for three years. During the first year, she used the former principal's system of scheduling the art, music, and physical education classes. The system was not complicated; the principal did all the work. After the first year, however, the schedule met with a chorus of complaints. Primary teachers complained that they did not have common planning time for reading. A 5th grade teacher objected to having all of her planning time in the afternoon. Another classroom teacher said it wasn't fair that one of the principal's so-called favorite teachers had had planning time right before lunch two years in a row. And the kindergarten teachers pointed out that they were the only ones who didn't have at least one break a day. Even the teachers of art, music, and physical education began complaining.

When scheduling time occurred the next year, the principal asked for volunteers to help with the master schedule. No one stepped forward. In fact, they stepped backward from the problem and said the principal should go ahead with it by herself. She

scheduled again and they complained again. But they still wouldn't assume responsibility for helping with the scheduling problem.

So as scheduling time approached during year three the principal refused to unilaterally build the schedule, and appointed a committee to work on it. But instead of completing the master schedule, the teachers completed a grievance form against the principal for requiring them to do administrative work.

LEADERSHIP IMPLICATIONS

The reality of people choosing to be victims rather than architects of change does not mean people are bad, lazy, or uncaring about their organizations. As Oshry (1992) argues, it is as if people are standing in front of two doors: Door A and Door B. Door A is the victim door and behind it is a powerful force pulling us through without deliberative thought or conscious choice on our part. Behind Door B, the architect door, is a brick wall. If we choose Door B, we actually have to create our own opening. It's not the natural, easy choice to make.

Because people often think and act based on their worst fears of what can happen, they remain trapped in the victim status. They lose any sense of control over their future. In contrast, when people think and act based on their highest hopes for the future, they find new energy and creative possibilities. These contrasting orientations between worst fears and highest hopes are not just matters of strategies. They are fundamental differences in how people choose to operate in organizations. Leaders need to help clarify that these choices exist. And they need to provide support, information, and resources to help people successfully make the more painful choice to go through Door B and embrace both the responsibility and accountability of being architects of change.

Leaders sometimes unintentionally contribute to others' victim status by reinforcing the patriarchal contract. They encourage the parent-child status between themselves and employees. They take care of those they supervise in exchange for total loyalty.

To create more resilient organizations, leaders need to break the dependency spiral. The break begins when leaders create a climate of trust and open communication and honor employees as valued members of the organization, not junior members trained to look upward for approval. Once a climate of trust is established, employees feel safer taking the risks associated with being architects of change.

Realities About Organizations

REALITY #6:
Most organizations operate nonrationally rather than rationally

To fully understand the power of this reality, we must first develop a common understanding of the concepts of rational and nonrational organizations (Patterson, Purkey, and Parker 1986). Related to organizational life, Figure 2.1 on pages 28-29 contrasts rational and nonrational perspectives for understanding how organizations tend to function. In summary form, rational systems function with a single set of uniform goals that provides stable, consistent direction to the organization over time. The power to make things happen resides almost exclusively at the top of the organizational chart. In fact, the formal chart determines who can have power and who cannot. Decision making in rational organizations is a logical, problem-solving process leading to the one best solution for the organization. The environment external to the organization stays out of internal affairs, acknowledging the right of the organization to make its own decisions.

The nonrational view of organizational reality stands in stark contrast to the rational perspective. It posits that organizations, in fact, are guided by multiple, competing sets of goals most often arrived at through bargaining and compromise. The power to make things happen is distributed throughout the organization in very informal ways, and decision making is inevitably a bargaining process to arrive at solutions that satisfy a number of constituencies. Further, the external environment gets involved in internal affairs, demanding a piece of the action at virtually every point in the decision-making process. Although both the rational and nonrational frameworks offer plausible ways of thinking about organizations, the nonrational model more accurately describes the realities of organizational life within schools and school systems.

REALITY #6 IN ACTION

About four years ago, the superintendent in a progressive, Northwestern school district of about 3,000 students called the senior administrative team together to discuss future directions for technology implementation. The superintendent reminded the team that a representative committee had been formed six months earlier to set some district direction. That committee had attempted to rationally talk about the pros and cons of four major

emphases: computer-assisted learning, computer-managed instruction, computer literacy, and administrative applications. Their discussion quickly turned into disagreements, with each school defending its own version of the status quo. After two more meetings with schools justifying their application as being most important, the committee had quietly dissolved.

The superintendent informed the administrative team it was time to move ahead on the issue. He posed the question, "What are our options?" The assistant superintendent said that, realistically, the options were limited. He commented that, "Even though we probably should engage in a systematic process to determine the highest priority application for computers, we're too far down the road to turn back. About 70 percent of our schools are emphasizing computer literacy while the rest that are using computers have concentrated on computer-assisted learning." In order to capitalize on the energy already expended, the assistant superintendent advised that schools be allowed to pursue either of the two goals. The team concurred, so the superintendent suggested that the original technology committee be reconvened to develop a rationale for the two goals and present recommendations to the school board within two weeks.

The process was set in motion. But once the superintendent's agenda for computers passed through the district's rumor mill, the school board was besieged by individuals and computer user groups lobbying for computer literacy to be the only goal of the district, at least for the present. When it came time for a vote, the board listened to two hours of community argument and voted 4-3 against the superintendent's recommendations. The board approved the single goal of computer literacy.

A week later, the local newspaper conducted a reader poll to assess the community's long-range expectations for computer technology. Seventy-three percent of the respondents answered "yes" to the question: Do you think the need for computer programming skills will be obsolete in five years? Eighty-two percent said "yes" to the question: Do you feel that using computers as a learning tool will be the most important computer skill five years from now? Succumbing to new political pressure, two weeks later the board reversed its original vote by a 4-3 margin in a surprise move by a board member who used the intricacies of parliamentary procedure to her political advantage.

Figure 2.1 Rational and Nonrational Models Contrasted

RATIONAL	NONRATIONAL
Goals	**Goals**
• There is a single set of uniform goals that provides consistent direction for us.	• There are multiple, sometimes competing sets of goals that attempt to provide direction for us.
• The district goals are clearly stated and specific.	• The district goals are somewhat ambiguous and general in nature.
• The goals remain stable over a sustained period of time.	• The goals change as conditions change.
• Organizational goals are set via a logical, problem-solving process.	• Organizational goals are arrived at through bargaining and compromise.
• The goals for the district are determined by the leaders of the organization.	• The goals for the district are set by many different forces, both inside and outside of the organization.
Power	**Power**
• The formal organizational chart determines who can have power to make things happen.	• Having access to information, support, and resources is the basis for power to make things happen.
• Power to make things happen is located almost exclusively at the top of the organizational chart.	• Power to make things happen is located throughout the organization.
• There is a very direct connection between what the central office says should happen in the classroom and what actually goes on behind the classroom door.	• The extent of implementing central office directives is in large part controlled by teachers at the classroom level.

Adapted from Patterson, J., and others. (1986). Productive School Systems for a Nonrational World. Alexandria, Va.: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, pp. 40-41.

LEADERSHIP IMPLICATIONS

The challenge then for leaders involved in organizational change is to provide rational leadership in the midst of a context that leans toward nonrationality. Leaders can provide a measure of stability to the system by addressing each of the four categories in the rational/nonrational model (see Figure 2.1 on pages 28-29).

Goals. School districts serve multiple constituencies and sometimes

Figure 2.1 Rational and Nonrational Models Contrasted (continued)

RATIONAL	NONRATIONAL
Decision Making	**Decision Making**
• The issues that receive attention are those that are most important at a given point in time.	• The issues that receive attention are those that are pressing for immediate resolution.
• The decision-making process makes sure that all feasible options are considered.	• The decision-making process usually ends up with a limited number of options to consider, constrained by factors such as politics, economics, and finances.
• The decision-making process keeps away extraneous forces (e.g., competing demands, outside pressures) that negatively affect logical decision making.	• The decision-making process accommodates various forces shaping eventual decisions (e.g., external pressures and persistence of people in their points of view).
• The decision-making process leads to a sound, one-best decision that maximizes organizational goals.	• The decision-making process incorporates compromise and concession, leading to a decision that may not have been the most educationally sound decision.
External Environment	**External Environment**
• The environment external to the school district remains passive while organizational decisions are made internally.	• The external environment maintains an active level of involvement in organizational affairs.
• The external environment acts in a stable and predictable fashion.	• The external environment acts in a somewhat unstable and unpredictable manner.
• The external environment respects and defers to the official expertise and official power vested in school district staff.	• The external environment questions organizational expertise and challenges the power of school officials.
• The external environment acknowledges the right of the organization to make its own decisions.	• The external environment demands a piece of the action at virtually every point in the decision-making process.

the self-interest of these constituencies don't mesh. Such multiple and sometimes competing organizational goals may leave the impression of aimlessness. But it is possible, for instance, to have separate organizational goals that attempt to meet the needs of different constituencies as long as these separate goals don't run contrary to the overall mission of the school district. One of the leader's major responsibilities then is to continuously clarify organizational goals in relation to the overall vision of the

system. Leaders must ensure that all proposed changes in district goals fit with the general direction in which the district is headed.

Power. When people think of changes in power relationships, they worry that some people will gain while others lose. Given the nonrational perspective, leaders need to remind themselves and to assure others that empowerment can be an open-ended quantity. The power to make the most difference in the lives of children generally rests with those closest to the students. Leaders become more powerful by giving up control that they never really had in the first place and taking responsibility for providing others access to the support, information, and resources needed to make things happen.

Decision Making. Despite the preference by some leaders to keep a tight grip on decisions in the organization, public institutions such as school districts are expected to open up the decision making to broad scrutiny and input. When this occurs, leaders know they run the risk of having to contend with the politics of bargaining, compromise, and concession. Leaders add common sense to the politics by creating decision-making processes that are clearly articulated, consistently followed, and aligned with core organizational values.

External Environment. Many leaders whisper to themselves, "If only external forces would just go away so we could do our jobs." From a nonrational perspective, leaders need to shift from if-only thinking to thinking that is more inclusive of the external environment. Because those outside the school district do have a stake in both the processes and outcomes of schooling, they deserve to be included in the school district's decision-making process. So leaders need to create expectations and procedures that allow this to happen.

Leaders serve an equally important role by always scanning the external environment to anticipate what lies on the horizon. At times, leaders must deflect unwarranted criticism aimed at those working in the organization. At other times, they must accept full responsibility for attacks on the system by outside forces so those inside the system don't have to spend their energy on the politics of the situation. In both cases, leaders serve as shock absorbers so that external forces won't create significant disruptions to the work inside the system.

REALITY #7:
Most organizations are wired to protect the status quo

Some people like to describe organizations through the metaphor of a clock. If all the gears are functioning properly, the mechanism runs efficiently. Each gear interfaces with and depends on its neighbor to work properly. When any gear fails to perform, the whole mechanism comes to a standstill and repair is in order. Viewing organizations through the mechanical lens leads to the conclusion that every unit (school or department) needs every other unit to function most efficiently as a whole. When all units are performing well, as the saying goes, "things run like clockwork." When any unit breaks, the challenge is to fix it.

Although the mechanical model holds surface appeal, it doesn't aptly describe the life of organizations. Organizations are more appropriately characterized as organic . . . living, growing systems in which the various units contribute to the vitality in complex ways, not in simple, mechanical fashion. When any unit fails to perform satisfactorily, other parts of the system compensate for the ailing unit until it can be fixed so the organism can continue to function. The human body is a wonderful example of such a system.

Understanding organizations as organic, not mechanical, becomes critical in accepting the natural tendency for systems to preserve the status quo. Because of the bombardment of stimuli from the external environment, organizations constantly struggle to ward off threats to their very existence. Just like other living organisms, organizations such as school systems are wired to survive by resisting change. Unfortunately, this tendency toward resistance typically does not allow the system to differentiate between necessary and unnecessary change.

O'Toole (1995) summarizes the power of the status quo by explaining that, "Individuals are what they believe, and groups are their cultures; hence, to require a group to change its shared beliefs is to threaten its very existence." To clarify organizations' ability to resist having the will of others imposed on them, O'Toole points to the fact that for nearly five decades American industry was able to resist the ideas of such eminent thinkers as Peter Drucker and W. Edwards Deming. When fundamental change becomes critical to organizational health, this natural tendency to preserve the status quo in organizations poses grave risks for organizations as well as leaders.

REALITY #7 IN ACTION

The school board of a fast-growing Southwestern community is comprised of four senior managers in various businesses in the community and one parent activist. According to the school board minutes from a retreat, the board believes that customer service will be a major shift in thinking for schools in the future. Virtually every other type of organization has made the shift to being more responsive to customers' needs. Some organizations made the shift voluntarily, while others were forced into this position. The school board feels a strong obligation to seriously explore the concept. For starters, they want to look at school choice and charter schools. The school board directs the superintendent to convene a task force representing a cross-section of perspectives in the community as well as a representative from each school in the district to examine the two concepts.

The superintendent has not expected this. She conveys her feelings to anyone who will listen. Principals and teachers get caught up in the emotion of this thing called customer service. They vehemently object to the idea of school districts viewing students and families as customers, and they strongly resent the idea that parents could pull their children out of their "home" attendance areas. In short, the immediate response in the district to the board's interest is overwhelmingly negative.

In turn, the board is surprised by the district staff's reaction. Board members argue that the very reason schools are in business is to serve the community's students and families. They decide to hold a series of forums in each school to discuss, logically and thoughtfully, the board's perspective and to listen carefully to others.

Each forum is packed with people eager to be heard, and each unfolds in a similar manner. The teachers say they were hired to teach the students living in that attendance area and, furthermore, students are not customers and education is not a business. Teachers and administrators claim that a move to school choice and charter schools will allow parents to make decisions based on teacher popularity, babysitter convenience, and other noneducational factors.

Parents at the forums argue just the opposite points. They claim that they have a right and responsibility to make decisions in the best interests of their children's education, and that charter schools and school choice will be a step in the right direction.

After three months of heated debate, the teachers union circulates a petition against the new ideas raised by the board. Ninety-

three percent of the teachers sign it. When the petition is presented to the board, union officials argue that nobody can prove that student performance will increase under the proposed plan. They claim also that the school district is just fine the way it is. Students are learning, teachers are teaching, and most parents are satisfied with the quality of education. In their final plea, the union officials ask each board member to comment publicly on why he or she thinks the status quo is not good enough. Eventually, the board grudgingly withdraws its proposal because members believe the dissension is sapping too much energy from everyone to make the effort worthwhile.

LEADERSHIP IMPLICATIONS

Leaders have an obligation to look at the big picture when looking out for an organization's future health. When the evidence accumulates that systemic, organic change is requisite to the vitality of the organization in the future, leaders must initiate and sustain change against heavy odds. As Fullan (1991) cautions, we have a huge negative legacy of failed reform that cannot be overcome through merely good intentions and a lot of leader rhetoric. Therefore, leaders need to create a sense of urgency (the burning platform) and appeal to employees' self-interests by clearly explaining that their future well-being is at stake. If, indeed, the platform of the organization is on fire, it becomes the leader's difficult assignment to help people see the flames, or at least smell the smoke.

REALITY #8:
Most organizations initiate change with an event-driven rather than value-driven mentality

As Sarason (1996) found during more than three decades of studying school reform, the more things change the more they stay the same . . . or get worse. Certainly, multiple complex causes contribute to this condition. One factor stands out, though, as a central theme. Organizations move through their organizational life in an event-driven fashion, not anchored to a set of organizational principles that focus the organization's energy and direction. In this context, the term "event" does not refer primarily to the usual image of events, such as back-to-school night, the annual talent show, and the academic awards banquet. Related to organizational change, event-driven means that change is characterized by a series of episodes, unconnected to each other, unconnected to a core set of principles, and occurring for a short time before being relegated to the proverbial last-year's-new-thing shelf.

Pick a topic: brain-based education, cooperative learning, site-based management, alternative scheduling, performance-based assessment, multicultural education. Each of these topics has core educational principles as a foundation. Each has the potential of contributing to a value-based school district. But a breakdown occurs when school districts embrace these (or other) initiatives simply because it seems like the right thing to do at the time, whether it be the *right* thing politically, emotionally, financially, or educationally.

Members of organizations don't intend to be event-driven. They sincerely believe their actions are based on key organizational principles. In fact, most can even point to a laminated mission statement hanging somewhere. But, despite good intentions, organizations sap their energy chasing a string of disconnected initiatives that end up on the junk heap of failed reform. No wonder it has become almost a mantra in teachers lounges to say: This too shall pass. Been there, done that, got the T-shirt.

REALITY #8 IN ACTION

For nearly 12 years, the superintendent of a small school district in the upper Midwest managed to avoid what he considered the fad of school-based management (SBM). Things were running rather smoothly. The board left the operations of the school district to the superintendent and the superintendent left the teaching to the teachers. Operationally, however, the district functioned in a very traditional style. All administrators reported to the superintendent, and he made most of the significant decisions, with occasional input from administrators who had demonstrated their loyalty over time.

Then conditions changed. Two new board members were elected on a platform of opening up the system to more involvement. Parents started asking about their role in district decision making. Teachers began raising questions about who determined school budgets, who set the annual school calendar, and who participated in textbook selection.

To satisfy these pressures, the superintendent reluctantly sent a team of board members, administrators, teachers, and parents to a three-day conference on SBM. They returned as converts to this concept, armed with reams of documents on how to implement SBM. After a series of school board study sessions, the board directed the superintendent to develop a strategic plan on SBM, including the following elements: decentralized school governance, school improvement councils, and parent advisory councils. The plan was to be fully implemented in two years.

The superintendent complied with the request. But he was quick to send messages informally to the principals that they were the decision makers in the schools. He let the teachers know that they were the professional educators and parents were not. And he let everyone know that the final authority to make district decisions belonged in the superintendent's office. But despite these undercurrents, the district proceeded with setting up school improvement councils, parent advisory councils, and building-level leadership teams. Once established, all of these groups struggled with role, purpose, decision-making authority, and a lack of direction from the superintendent.

Over the next three years, both board members elected on the platform of opening up the system left the board for various reasons. The governing structures that had been established started to disintegrate when conflicts occurred and people didn't know how to resolve them constructively. Teachers found themselves sitting on too many committees, which they believed diverted their attention from students. Principals didn't like committees meeting all of the time without their involvement. And the superintendent clearly was uncomfortable with this encroachment on management rights.

Over the course of five years, school district operations slowly but steadily shifted back to the traditional model. When a newly elected board member asked what happened to SBM, the typical reply was that it was too much work, that people didn't like being distracted from their main responsibilities, and that the traditional way of doing business was much more efficient . . . everybody knew their place.

LEADERSHIP IMPLICATIONS

If event-driven organizations are the norm, how do leaders do something as unnatural as creating value-driven organizations? As expected, the answer is, "not easily." But returning once again to the difference between optimism and hope, leaders who believe it is moral, right, and just for organizations to be value-driven, do whatever it takes to make it happen.

For starters, leaders have an obligation to understand thoroughly the distinction between core values and mere slogans. Leaders must move organizations beyond putting words on paper and declaring the assignment finished. They need to create the reflective time within the organization to visit and revisit the meaning behind the words. And they must have concrete strategies for leading groups through this difficult process (Patterson 1993). Until a group achieves a common understanding and commitment to the principles underlying a change initiative, any support for change is built on a fragile foundation. When people want to jump quickly into a discussion of solutions or outcomes, leaders must return the focus to core values. After acknowledging that a discussion of outcomes is important, leaders must first make sure the group has a clear understanding of and commitment to the reasons why they are doing what they are doing.

When presented with the requirements necessary for shifting from event-driven to value-driven organizations, leaders find themselves saying, "We can't afford to invest the time and energy to do this right now. With so many things piled on our plates, we cannot be spending precious time talking about values." The harsh reality is that leaders can't afford *not* to. The vitality, even the survival, of the organization is at stake.

REALITY #9:
Most organizations engage in long-term change with short-term leadership

Today, most people have moved grudgingly to the point of acknowledging that organizational change is inevitable. Many people even say that they can live with it, but they are quick to offer the following conditions: Make sure whatever needs to be done is done all at once; don't have it be disruptive; try not to let it cost very much; and, by the way, don't let it affect me.

Deep inside, we all know that these conditions can't be honored. Indeed, the reality of genuine change is that there are no shortcuts. Systemic change takes a long time to plan, implement, and continue before it becomes embedded into the culture of "how we do business around here" (Fullan 1991). How long is long? While no absolute standards can be used as benchmarks, the institutionalization of systemic change appears to take from 7 to 10 years (Fullan 1991, Sarason 1996, Wissler and Ortiz 1988). This means an organization needs to persistently and passionately pursue a single initiative for almost a decade in order to increase the chances that the change will stick. Add to the mix the reality of multiple initiatives occurring simultaneously and the conclusion is inevitable. Long-term changes call for long-term leadership.

The harsh reality is that school systems function with short-term leadership. About 55 percent of the nation's superintendents serve in positions for less than six years (National School Boards Association 1995). In urban districts, where the need for long-term change is more acute, turnover among superintendents is even more frequent. In 1993, the Council of Great City Schools reported that 42 of 47 urban districts had hired new superintendents since 1990 (Yee and Cuban 1996). Leadership in higher education presents a similar picture. In a recent study, 53 percent of college and university presidents served for less than five years (Ross, Green, and Henderson 1993). Even though these statistics can fluctuate and be analyzed in different ways, one conclusion stands out. On the average, organizational leaders leave before organizational initiatives have a chance to succeed.

REALITY #9 IN ACTION

A small city school district on the East Coast benefited from the leadership of a talented female superintendent for 17 years. When she retired, the board appointed the assistant superintendent into the superintendent's position without advertising the position. The new superintendent was constantly compared to the previous one and came up short on most measures. During his tenure, he tried to switch the administrative salary schedule to a

performance-based system. He also mandated a new clinical supervision model for teachers and a rotating system for moving principals around every three years. Additionally, he installed the concept of consensus bargaining. In 12 months he was quietly encouraged to leave.

The next time around the board conducted a national search and hired a person from the West Coast. The new superintendent arrived with impressive credentials and a strong track record as a tough decision maker. After six months in office he scrapped consensus bargaining because he believed that the negotiations process wasn't about reaching consensus; it was about taking tough stands in the best financial interests of the taxpayers. He favored a different teacher supervision model and proceeded to personally train all administrators in the process. Finally, he started an adopt-a-school project with the business community. This model had been a big hit in his previous district. Unfortunately, after a year on the job he had to retire due to illness.

The board appointed an interim superintendent who had recently retired after 41 years in a neighboring district. He served until the beginning of the next fiscal year. During his tenure, the board put all recent initiatives on hold.

After another superintendent search, the board voted 4-3 to hire a particular candidate. When the local newspaper published the board's split vote, the candidate withdrew her candidacy. The second choice candidate had already accepted a position in another district. The board didn't want to start another search so close to the beginning of the school year, so they promoted the high school principal to the superintendent's position for a one-year term, with the understanding that he could apply for the position when it was posted again.

The high school principal did apply and was elected in a 5-2 vote by the board. As superintendent, he aggressively pursued new initiatives in the areas of block scheduling, inclusion, and portfolio assessment. And he returned the administrative compensation system to a salary schedule like that used for teachers because administrators did not like being compared to each other. Three years later, due to board turnover, the superintendent found that the board no longer supported him or his initiatives.

With the revolving-door syndrome for superintendents in this district, the editorial page writer for the local newspaper raised a very logical question, "What initiatives have survived the upheaval in leadership over the past seven years?" People were hard-pressed for an answer.

LEADERSHIP IMPLICATIONS

What can be done to break the pattern of attempting long-term change with short-term leadership? Given that there is no shortcut to long-term change, the search for solutions shifts to the area of leadership. The most direct solution is somehow to increase the tenure of leaders. Although easier said than done, if school boards and superintendents are truly committed to systemic change, then school boards need to find ways to make a corresponding commitment to the executive leadership. Currently, superintendents find themselves in a predicament similar to coaches. When the track record of success starts to become blurred by a few losses, the coach is fired. The owners remain. The system remains. The players remain. The coach leaves. When school districts chalk up a few losses in the eyes of the community, symptomatic relief comes in the form of a new superintendent. Virtually every other member of the system remains in place. A longer term commitment between board and superintendent would increase the chances for seeing systemic changes bear fruit.

If the turnover rate can't be altered substantially, school systems are left to seek consistency in district direction from multiple superintendents. According to Fullan and Watson (1991), what it will take is a leading superintendent with a tenure of five to seven years, followed by another successful superintendent for a similar term deliberately selected to complement and extend the district's work. Fullan and Watson caution that, under the best of circumstances, it is going to take two or three successive superintendents all working from the same fundamental commitments to organizational change to institute effective change. The success of this approach depends on a collection of school board members understanding and accepting the need to secure long-term leadership direction.

Having core organizational values drive the system is vital to achieving long-term district direction with one or multiple superintendents. If school districts anchor themselves to core beliefs, these beliefs can transcend the tenure of superintendents and governing boards. In fact, the core values become the basis for selecting future leaders, both at the board and administrative levels. The stability of the organization then rests on the extent to which the values shaping the future transcend the personalities and power of those providing leadership at any given point in time.

In a landmark study of visionary companies that have stood the test of time, Collins and Porras (1994) examined organizations from 1926 to 1991. They found that the distinguishing factor separating truly outstanding organizations from their closest rivals was the concept of organizational values. The great companies, those built to last, maintained their stability across economic cycles and changes in executive leadership because of their long-term commitment to the values that drove the system. School districts have the capacity to provide similar stability.

REALITY #10:
Most organizations expect the greatest amount of change with the least amount of conflict

Just living and working in organizations today pushes people to their limits. Then, on top of the energy demanded to do daily work, organizations expect employees to expend additional energy adapting to overlapping, nonstop change, all of which occurs under the organizational banner of good intentions. Organizational leaders know that if they aren't moving ahead, they are falling behind. They feel pressed to show demonstrable evidence that the organization is systematically engaged in meaningful change. In short, the proverbial organizational plate is piled high. Many would argue *too high.*

So when the organization extracts time, effort, and energy from employees engaged in change, leaders know they can't afford to have additional energy spent dealing with conflict related to the change. Organizational change initiators typically think, "let's just act like adults, get the job done, and set aside personal agendas. We don't have extra time to waste on conflictual issues." Many leaders even worry that acknowledging the conflict might send signals to everyone watching that things aren't under control. If things aren't going smoothly, then someone will need to be held accountable for straightening them out. That someone usually is the leader.

In many respects, individuals within the organization also want conflict to just go away because they are acutely aware of the chain reaction. Conflict creates tension. Tension forces people to confront the reality that harmony is missing. Absence of harmony signals that something is wrong. Whatever is wrong will need to be fixed. And trying to fix conflictual situations or relationships isn't easy. So to put an abrupt halt to the potential chain reaction, people pretend that conflict doesn't exist.

Leaders and other employees can mask the conflict temporarily. They can push it away from direct exposure. They can even shoot the messengers who speak of conflict. But they can't ignore it away. In the long run, suppressed or even denied conflict will erupt into dysfunctional behavior, organizationally and interpersonally, and it will cost everyone.

REALITY #10 IN ACTION

For several years, a middle-class school district in the Southwest carefully studied the concept of including special education students in "regular" classrooms. A committee reviewed the pertinent literature, made site visits to districts recommended as cutting edge in this area, and involved people from multiple per-

spectives in deliberations. The committee recommended implementing the inclusion concept throughout the school district over a three-year period. The board was proud of the work by the committee and accepted its recommendation. The superintendent was proud of the professional way the committee discussed the complex issues and came to a consensus decision. And the teacher groups were proud of the way people rallied around the core beliefs of inclusion.

Then came the time for implementation. With very good intentions, "regular" education teachers welcomed students with disabilities into their classrooms, along with their teachers. The special education school was closed and students with severe needs returned to their home attendance areas.

After a while, though, the reality of this fundamental shift became more apparent, and tensions started to mount. Special education teachers no longer had their own classrooms. Regular education teachers were no longer alone in their classrooms, and they began to realize they didn't have the necessary training or skills to adapt the curriculum and assist the special needs students. Students began complaining about the disruptive behavior of the integrated students. Parents complained about the lack of attention their own children were receiving. School principals found themselves caught in the middle because they could see the viewpoints of the various groups.

The superintendent was soon criticized because conflict was not the accepted norm in the school district, and the school board wanted to know what the superintendent was going to do to quell the disturbances. The superintendent called a special meeting and admonished people for not acting professionally. He reminded everyone in the room that they had approved the inclusion plan, and that the entire community was watching them. In closing the meeting, he said, "It's time for everyone to get along, act professionally, and keep your complaints to yourselves. Our students are depending on you to implement this plan with a collegial spirit. Any questions?" With no questions forthcoming, the meeting ended and people filed out of the room silently, taking their conflicts with them.

LEADERSHIP IMPLICATIONS

So what can leaders do to alter the natural tendency to avoid conflict? First, leaders need to accept the reality that conflict is inevitable. It is endemic to all relationships, organizations, civilizations, and species. Conflict is not the issue. Conflict is the condition. The issue centers on how leaders choose to handle the conflict. Leaders need to move beyond

phony harmony by acknowledging that conflict in organizations is natural and all right.

Second, leaders need to create a safe environment for confronting conflict in a constructive way. By valuing the energy of dissent, leaders can show people inside and outside the organization that honest conflict in a safe environment provides the seeds for rich solutions to organizational issues. When conflict surfaces, leaders need to move to the tension point, not away from it. The tension can be used creatively by capitalizing on the energy of dissent and leading people to reach solutions everyone can accept.

Third, leaders must support the training necessary for all organization members to become more skilled in conflict resolution and consensus building. Conflict brings out the deepest differences in perspectives and amplifies the diversity among group members. Therefore, groups must have the requisite skills to use conflict as positive energy in pursuit of a strong collective decision. One school district, for example, trained every employee in conflict resolution skills. It even took an additional step by training approximately 20 employees, from all job classification areas, to be facilitators for other groups in the district. When an elementary school staff had difficulty resolving an issue about who supervises recess duty in cold weather, the school requested that a pair of facilitators attend a staff meeting to help them work through their differences. This strategy for resolving conflict is one way of sending a message throughout the organization that conflict is normal. The key is to resolve it in a constructive way.

Realities About People and Organizations

REALITY #11:
Most people and organizations deny that the other 10 statements are, in fact, their own reality

While working on the previous sections of this book, I had a troubling feeling about writing this section about denial. I knew it wasn't going to be easy or fun to elaborate on the reality about people and organizations denying their own reality.

Then, the evening before I wrote this section, reasons for my uneasiness began to unfold. It all began as dinner conversation with my wife. I said, somewhat tentatively, that I wasn't looking forward to writing the section on denial . . . but I didn't know why. I proceeded to think aloud about how I would approach the topic. Maybe I could do a pre-test and post-test to see if readers changed their perspectives about acceptance of the harsh realities after having read this much of the book. Maybe I could challenge readers to accept the realities if they want to be effective in the future. Or perhaps I could ask readers to identify situations in their own professional experiences when, upon reflection, they now realize they denied these realities.

As I said these words, I couldn't help feeling as if I were being too rational and logical about this. It's not rational. It's emotional and painful to confront one's own denial. Suddenly, a little voice inside my head said, "To prove the point, Mr. Author, why don't you write about your own experience with denial of some of these realities?"

Well . . . now what? I turned to my wife and said, "You know what I need to do? As painful as it is going to be, I need to confront my own experience with denial. I don't like even to entertain the possibility that I ever acted first in my own self-interest, acted as a victim, or refused to understand the *what* and *why* of messages people were sending me. But to better understand the magnitude of what I'm asking other leaders to confront, I need to feel, first-hand, what it's like."

Reluctantly, therefore, I will describe a real-life situation in which I personally suffered because of some of the harsh realities discussed in this book.

* * *

In 1988, I was selected to serve as superintendent of the fastest growing school district in Wisconsin. The district justifiably enjoys a fine reputation for the quality of education, and the district, as well as the entire community, possesses a fierce sense of pride in its reputation.

But we can all stretch and grow. The board asked me to provide lead-

ership in making some changes that would better position the district for the future. So I did. During the first four years of my tenure, we moved heavily and swiftly into SBM. Other companion initiatives included consensus bargaining, Issues Resolution Councils, revision of the teacher evaluation model to a more collegial approach, movement toward inclusion in special education, mandatory intensive training for all new teachers in state-of-the-art teaching methods through conversion of all-administrator meetings to leadership development sessions for graduate credit, reorganization of central office staffing, and conflict resolution training for all district employees. And I'm sure my former colleagues could add many more items to the list.

As these initiatives accumulated, the system started to send out messages of circuit-overload. People asked me to slow things down. Board members said they were getting the impression that it was too much, too fast. Employees throughout the district complained that they didn't have enough time to do any of these initiatives adequately.

So what did I do? When I first began to feel and hear the rumblings about my moving too fast, I rationalized that *they* weren't moving fast enough. When the messages got louder and more widespread, I got louder about the importance of all the good things that were under way. I found myself selling the virtues of the many new initiatives as what was in the long-term best interest of the organization. The more I pushed, the more loudly people said, "we are initiating a lot of important stuff, Jerry, but we're not implementing very much of it very well."

Someone said that we live life forward and understand it backward. As I lived through the flurry of initiatives that I encouraged as superintendent, it all made such good sense. I thought I was acting in the best interest of the organization. I thought I was listening to what employees were telling me. I thought I was the architect and they were playing victim.

Three years later, I now see things differently. Now that I am compelled to reflect on this time period (understand it backward), I realize that I was denying my own reality. I was putting my own self-interest first, not the interests of the organization. It's not that I was being selfish. It's just that my own interest as leader was to position the school district for the future in as many ways as possible, as fast as possible. In other words, *I* decided it would be good for people. The people who were trying very hard to carry out the initiatives were also trying to tell me that it was in the organization's long-term best interest to slow down so energy could be spent on quality implementation.

As people were saying these things, upon reflection I suppose I didn't want to know the *what* and *why* of the message they were sending. I denied that their view was, indeed, real. If I accepted what they were telling me then I would have to assume responsibility for making some

adjustments in my own vision for the district and in my own pace for leading the district. As long as *I* didn't get the message, *they* would continue, from my biased perspective, to be responsible for not moving fast enough.

A third reality I lived was the role of victim. When the talented employees throughout the district started resisting the volume and pace of new initiatives, I took on the silent martyr role. I said to myself, "Look at all the neat things we're trying to do. Look at how visionary you've been, Jerry. Look at how much better positioned the district will be five years from now if we are able to pull off these initiatives. And what do you get for all this? People want to return to the good old days. I deserve to feel sorry for myself." So I assumed the victim role. And I'm sure I acted out some of the other harsh realities also.

I now realize that as a result of my denial of these realities several initiatives quietly disappeared because the system didn't have enough energy to spend on fully implementing them. Of course, I had good intentions. But as someone else said, "Isn't it ironic that we want to be judged by our intentions, and we judge others by their actions or the impact of their actions." I deeply feel that my intentions were honorable. My actions, however, caused people a lot of stress.

I close this section by acknowledging that *all of us* have the tendency to deny the harsh realities. And I can say that it would have been in the long-term best interest of everyone in the district, including myself, for me to have resisted the denial path and to have chosen the path of acknowledging what I needed to do to alter my own reality.

REALITY #12:
Most people and organizations *do* have the capacity to develop resilience in the face of the other 11 realities

Clearly, it is not easy for people and organizations to alter their tendencies toward the first 11 realities. But individuals and organizations do have the *capacity*—the ability plus the will to make something happen—to increase their resilience. The following is a review of the major points leaders need to remember when working to effect real, systemic change.

- Invest ample time in understanding the various group members' self-interests and find ways of meeting those interests while, at the same time, doing what is best for the organization.
- Help members of your organization see connections between particular change initiatives and the general direction in which the organization is headed. Also, build into the system specific procedures that require people to assume responsibility for personally understanding proposed change initiatives.
- Create a sense of urgency for major change by selling the change initiative on the principle of pain. Expose the reality that the pain of not changing will be greater, in the long run, than the short-term pain of changing.
- Strengthen interpersonal trust by engaging in authentic, intentionally redundant communication about the proposed change. Show how this change connects to the core organizational values. And be open to examining your own conduct and acknowledging times when your behavior did not measure up to your own publicly professed values.
- Strengthen organizational trust by building into the system procedures that allow people to challenge, without fear of retribution, the conduct and intentions of those initiating change.
- Help individuals see that they do, indeed, have a choice between being victims or architects of change. Help others move from operating out of their worst fears to operating from a belief in achieving their highest hopes. Then provide the support, information, and resources needed to help people be architects rather than victims.

- Acknowledge that school systems tend to be nonrational and apply the four basic strategies for leading in a nonrational environment.
  (1) Continually clarify the organization's goals in relation to the organization's overall vision.
  (2) Empower people by believing in them and letting go of traditional notions of controlling leadership.
  (3) Create and consistently follow clearly articulated decision-making processes aligned with organizational values.
  (4) Serve as a shock absorber so external forces will not cause major disruptions to those working within your organization.
- Help people see the urgency of supporting the proposed change. Appeal to people's emotional side by demonstrating that each individual's future well-being is at risk if change is not achieved.
- Create reflective time within the organization's routine operations to achieve a common understanding and commitment to core values. Develop strategies within the system to hold people accountable for aligning practices with these values.
- Develop a long-term commitment to long-term organizational direction. Build stability into the system by establishing core values that transcend the personality and power of any individual leader.
- Accept the reality that organizational conflict is inevitable and create a safe environment for constructively handling conflict. Support conflict resolution and consensus-building training for all members of the organization.
- Resist the natural tendency to deny the harsh realities of organizational change. Instead, acknowledge them and apply strategies to help your organization become more resilient in adapting to change.

Throughout Part 2, I have offered guidelines to help leaders build resilience into organizations by acknowledging the realities of organizational change. Strengthening organizational resilience is the first part of successfully leading systemic change. The next major piece of the puzzle for leaders is helping others develop individual resilience.

Part 3 of this book focuses on ways leaders can help others in the organization develop individual resilience by understanding the ways individuals might perceive any given change initiative and the resulting issues they might have related to organizational change. Only by understanding these issues can leaders help others work through them.

PART THREE

INCREASING INDIVIDUAL RESILIENCE IN OTHERS

When organizational change is initiated, leaders typically stand in front of various groups trying to explain the *what* and *why* underlying the change. As they look across the room at the faces staring back at them, it is difficult if not impossible to know how each individual is interpreting the information about the change. The most efficient way for leaders to help the group move ahead is to presume everyone has a common set of needs that, therefore, calls for a common set of strategies. But the dynamics of change affect people in different ways depending on how they perceive the change in relation to their own lives, and effective leaders must find ways to determine just how others might be reacting to change initiatives.

Determining Where People Are in Relation to Change

When trying to determine how people might perceive and react to change, it helps to consider how they might categorize the change in terms of four sets of variables: (1) inside/outside; (2) refining/reframing; (3) initiating/responding; (4) investing/spending. This can be done by answering the question provided with each set of variables.

DYNAMIC: INSIDE/OUTSIDE

Leaders' Question: Is the impetus for change coming from inside or outside the organization?

Inside change refers to organizational change initiated *primarily* by forces inside the school system. Examples include times when a school board decides to shift to a year-round-school schedule or when senior management in a school district decides to become aggressive in recruiting a more ethnically pluralistic teaching staff.

Outside change refers to change initiated primarily by forces outside the organization. Outside change occurs, for example, when the state

department of education increases the number of credits required for high school graduation or when the parents of talented and gifted children pressure the board into creating a separate school for these students. Even though the board will make the actual decision in the second example, the impetus for change was parents outside of the organization.

DYNAMIC: REFINING/REFRAMING

Leaders' Question: Will the change result in refining or reframing?

Refining describes change that occurs when the organization adjusts *how* something is currently being done. This type of change includes minor process improvements, mid-course corrections, and adaptations in strategy. Refining can happen, for example, as a result of financial auditors recommending that the district modify slightly the annual report or when a school staff decides to conduct a new type of survey to ask parents about ways the school can improve its services.

Reframing refers to fundamental changes in something an organization does. Whereas refining consists of minor changes, reframing consists of major shifts in thinking. Reframing occurs when a school board decides to get out of the teacher hiring process and retains a private company to handle all applications or when a new state law is adopted that allows charter schools within the district to hire non-certified teachers.

DYNAMIC: INITIATING/RESPONDING

Leaders' Question: Are the people undergoing the change process initiating the process or responding to it?

Initiating occurs when people undergoing change are instrumental in the design phase of the change. Initiating behavior occurs, for instance, when a person serves on the steering committee that recommends a move to block scheduling or when the superintendent's management team decides to move their offices into the schools.

In contrast to initiating, responding refers to situations when people are on the receiving end of change designed by others. Those responding might help initiate some parts of the implementation process, but the original decision to change comes *to* them, not *from* them. Examples of responding include actions taken by a principal after reading in the morning newspaper that the school board voted to adopt tougher standards on student exit exams or actions taken by a teacher who learns through the rumor mill that the principal has decided all teachers in the school should start completing daily lesson plans.

DYNAMIC: INVESTING/SPENDING

Leaders' Question: Will others believe that the change will result in them investing their energy or spending it?

Investing and spending, in this context, refer to how people use their own energy. If individuals perceive that a given change is an investment, they believe that, on balance, the change is worth doing. More specifically, investing means people use their energy to seize opportunities, solve problems, or manage dilemmas. Taking a long-range perspective, they believe there will be an ultimate payoff to expending their scarce energy on the change initiative. Investing occurs when a person becomes an advocate for implementing a police-school liaison program that places officers full time in each school in anticipation of increased acts of violence or when an individual tries to secure federal funding for a school-to-work program by writing grant proposals.

Spending, on the other hand, refers to times when people use their energy to resist being pulled from the status quo because they don't believe that the change initiative is worth giving up the positive features of how business is currently done. The spending mentality occurs, for example, when a principal forms a committee to lobby against the superintendent's reorganization plan or when a teacher starts a letter writing campaign to state officials complaining that too many state mandates exist.

At first glance, this classification system seems like a rather benign way to describe individual perceptions of organizational change. However, the framework offers a powerful way for leaders to analyze how individuals, apart from the group, think and feel, and to develop strategies for helping individuals move ahead. As shown in Figure 3.1 on page 52, the dynamics of change can be grouped according to 16 distinct patterns.

An examination of the two patterns at the opposite ends of the spectrum illustrates the power of the framework for analyzing people's perceptions of change. At the two extremes, people might perceive a particular change as inside/refining/initiating/investing or as outside/reframing/responding/spending. Under the first set of variables, most individuals feel the greatest sense of support for what is about to happen. At the other extreme, people feel the most resentment and anxiety about change. Change that falls into the first set of variables requires the smallest withdrawal from people's personal energy accounts. Change that falls at the other extreme depletes individual energy accounts the most. Let's look briefly again at each set of variables in terms of its effect on personal energy accounts.

Inside change is preferable to outside change because when change is initiated by people within the system virtually everyone feels they have some influence over what happens and why—that they either directly or

Figure 3.1 The Dynamics of Change

INSIDE REFINING INITIATING INVESTING	INSIDE REFINING INITIATING SPENDING	INSIDE REFINING RESPONDING INVESTING	INSIDE REFINING RESPONDING SPENDING
INSIDE REFRAMING INITIATING INVESTING	INSIDE REFRAMING INITIATING SPENDING	INSIDE REFRAMING RESPONDING INVESTING	INSIDE REFRAMING RESPONDING SPENDING
OUTSIDE REFINING INITIATING INVESTING	OUTSIDE REFINING INITIATING SPENDING	OUTSIDE REFINING RESPONDING INVESTING	OUTSIDE REFINING RESPONDING SPENDING
OUTSIDE REFRAMING INITIATING INVESTING	OUTSIDE REFRAMING INITIATING SPENDING	OUTSIDE REFRAMING RESPONDING INVESTING	OUTSIDE REFRAMING RESPONDING SPENDING

Understanding how people view change initiatives allows leaders to develop strategies for helping individuals become more resilient.

indirectly have access to those shaping the change initiative. In contrast, people sense they have little influence over change brought about by forces outside the system. They feel at the mercy of other people's powers.

Refining is preferable to reframing because refining is merely making adjustments in the way business currently is conducted. It doesn't disrupt people's expectations for how they should perform their professional responsibilities. Reframing, on the other hand, literally means changing frames . . . changing the paradigm of how to think about the vision and values of the organization. Such a shift causes major disruption to people's views of how they carry out their job assignments.

Initiating is preferable to responding because when individuals have a voice in shaping the design of the change effort, they typically develop strong ownership from the beginning. As the change effort gets under way, the initiators have the advantage of planning how the change will lead the organization into the future. Those on the receiving end of the change are at a distinct disadvantage. All they know is what they are told. They don't have the benefit of the intense discussions held by the initiating group. The responders' buy-in to the proposed change must follow the same, difficult journey the initiators have already taken.

Investing is preferable to spending because those who hold an investment perspective believe that the change is worth their time and effort. Even when, at times, the change initiative seems to collapse into chaos, people with an investment orientation manage to keep their focus on the long term. Individuals who see a certain change initiative from a spending viewpoint believe that the change will be a drain on their energy. As they look to the future, all they see is a depleted energy account.

Between the two extreme positions, there are 14 other patterns. Each one has its own dynamic and its own potential set of advocates in the organization. When discussing change, leaders can take a quick read of individuals' perceptions by asking group members how they would categorize the change using the four variables. Leaders can use this snapshot to design strategies for helping individuals become more resilient when confronted with change. For example, leaders can make special note of people who label themselves as responders and include them directly in initiating the implementation phase of change. And leaders can identify those who have a spending orientation and apply strategies to help them see that the change will serve their self-interest and will require minimal withdrawal from their energy accounts. When people realize that the change will benefit them, their perspective likely will shift from spending to investing and they will become more resilient.

Helping People Move from Where They Are to Where They Need To Be

Once a decision has been made to implement an organizational change, leaders generally have definite plans about how to accomplish the logistics of the change. Strategic plans, action plans, or other similar labels capture the who, what, where, when, and how of organizational change. Usually missing from these plans, however, is the human dimension. How do leaders help individuals move through the endings and loss they inevitably suffer? How do leaders support individuals through the ambiguity of leaving the familiar and not yet arriving at the future? How do leaders help people find their places in the changed organization?

DISTINGUISHING BETWEEN EXTERNAL CHANGES AND INTERNAL TRANSITIONS

Most people can identify with the experience of trying to fly from one city to another, only to encounter a few problems along the way. Nagging disruptions to even the most carefully made plans can include delayed flights, missed connections, and waiting in line for lost luggage.

These unexpected events represent changes that happen *to* people. But the events that happen are only one piece of the change process. Another piece is how people individually adapt to the changes. Some people who experience these airline problems lose their tempers and lash out at the airline staff. Others bury themselves in a good book to make the time pass more quickly. In other words, the way people internally cope with external changes varies considerably among individuals.

Applying this notion to organizations, it is easy to see why leaders cannot assume that all individuals move through the phases of change in a cookie-cutter way. In fact, leaders can assume that the transition each person experiences truly is personal. Leaders need to make sure they fully understand the three phases people move through and apply strategies for assisting movement in the most supportive way possible.

PHASE 1: CASTING OFF

Letting go of the past without a clear vision of what the future holds

Every change causes loss. Even positive changes individuals embrace require people to give up things. So leaders cannot assume that planned, positive organizational change comes without a price for individuals. Instead, they must identify the types of losses that will be incurred and devise strategies for helping people deal with the losses in a healthy way. The work of William Bridges (1991) offers valuable insights into these

issues. Although loss can be viewed in numerous ways, this section focuses on the losses of connections, territory, meaning, and control.

Loss of connections. When something new begins, we lose connections to whatever is ending. Those connections can involve relationships, memories of the past, or parts of our personal identity. In order to move forward through change, we must honor the loss of connections. Organizational leaders can help by designing strategies that allow people to celebrate the past, talk about the connections being given up, and put to rest fond memories. One way of achieving this is through ritual.

By participating in activities symbolizing the "burying of the past," individuals can grieve the loss of connections. All too often, leaders want the pain to go away for others. So leaders try to hide the fact that loss is occurring. For instance, some leaders believe the cold, hard facts should be enough to convince people that a new initiative demands a celebration, not a wake. Instead, leaders need to encourage the unfolding of the grief process as natural and necessary.

Loss of Territory. Another major loss most individuals experience during organizational change is the loss of territory. Territory can be as tangible as office space or as intangible as the loss of perceived stature. Not surprisingly, physical trappings and sphere of influence serve as markers of individual power or status in organizations. Leaders can assist those losing territory by acknowledging the loss as real and important to the individual, and by helping individuals move beyond the view that territory dictates status. Leaders should help individuals explore the range of options other than just territory that will strengthen their status in colleagues' eyes.

Loss of Meaning. A third type of loss is the loss of meaning. If people don't understand the *why* of organizational change, then the change becomes nonsense, and individuals believe they are being forced into meaningless change and out of a world that had a lot of meaning for them. Organizational leaders, therefore, need to be meaning makers. In a practical sense, they need to point the way by showing how the change will enhance the self-respect and well-being of the individuals affected. Face-to-face, authentic communication coupled with examples of how individuals can contribute meaningfully in the changed organization will go a long way in helping people take a leap of faith and believe that personal meaning will be there after the changes occur.

Loss of Control. Finally, loss of control represents a tremendous barrier to overcome as individuals struggle with the prospect of change. The feeling of powerlessness is debilitating. Most vulnerable are those whose self-esteem or confidence is tied to being in control of the details of their lives. To break through the barriers, leaders need to work hard to provide individuals with options. Given the reality of change, how can the individu-

als affected have some say in the outcomes of what happens? Returning some semblance of control through choice can help return order and stability to the lives of those affected by change.

Leaders must pay close attention to the powerful impact that personal loss has on people's ability to adapt during the change process. Correspondingly, leaders need to build into the system strategies and structures for helping individuals successfully adapt to the changes at hand. Resolving the loss in a productive manner results in a smaller drain on individuals' resource accounts as they encounter the second phase of transition.

PHASE 2: TWEENER TIME

Struggling with the ambiguity and uncertainty of being between the past and the future

Tweener Time is the confusing period when the old reality has been jettisoned and the future has yet to be determined. Marked by instability, ambiguity, and a feeling of being leaderless, this time calls for measures that produce temporary stability. Leaders need to put into effect interim rules, policies, organizational structures, and whatever else it takes to help individuals make sense of the organization's apparent drifting (Bridges 1991). During Tweener Time, for example, some organizations have implemented a formal transition team charged with monitoring the progress of the change. This team serves an important role as a clearinghouse for rumors, new information, and creative ideas. Leaders need to anticipate old baggage from the past surfacing again, and they need to expect that dissident voices will get louder. The transition team is one mechanism for keeping leaders informed about these forces.

Empathic listening by leaders who demonstrate their sincere concern for the employees' needs also helps individuals during Tweener Time. If leaders realize that Tweener Time breeds confusion, they can help people accept this reality and see that the time can also be one of tremendous creativity because people have an opportunity to create new meaning in anticipation of new beginnings for themselves and the organization.

PHASE 3: NEW HORIZONS

The place along the way where new energy abounds.

Individuals emerge from Tweener Time as the changes in the organization begin to take shape in front of their eyes. What seemed like an eternity with the organization adrift at sea now seems to have form and substance. As long as employees see hope for themselves, they can also see hope for the rebirth of the organization. Individuals need help at this stage establishing their place in the "new" organization. Leaders need to be out in

front, developing training programs to increase the sense of efficacy for people in their new roles; new job descriptions may require employees to get technical training in how to do things differently. Leaders must also provide individual and group support as people adapt to different structures. Professional development in the form of conflict resolution and consensus building are important as new relationships emerge from the ashes of the old organization (Patterson 1993). And finally, leaders can work with individuals to discover untapped talents that more than compensate for the losses experienced from shedding the former organization.

Providing Caring, Clarity, Choice, and Hope

Throughout discussions about leading the human side of change, one thing is apparent. People are different. Their needs, desires, worst fears, and sense of efficacy combine to shape individualistic perceptions of this phenomenon called organizational change. For leaders, these varying viewpoints pose quite a challenge when fashioning strategies to help people become more resilient. But in one very important way, people are all the same. Everyone needs four things from the organization in general . . . and from leaders in particular. Regardless of their level of support for the change and irrespective of their place in the power structure, everyone needs caring, clarity, choice, and hope.

Caring. People need to believe that the members of the organization care about them. This does not mean that the organization should operate in a caretaking mode, allowing people to view themselves as victims of major organizational change. But people want to work in an organization that shows compassion, empathy, and concern for the individual.

Clarity. Also, people want clarity. They want the security of knowing how the organization works, where it is heading, and what they might experience along the way. As stated in Reality #2, when first confronted with major organizational change, most individuals don't want to know the what and why of the change because it will mean that they will have to be responsible for carrying out the change. In general, though, individuals constantly seek out any bits of information that will remove ambiguity and limit the depletion of their energy accounts as they strive to understand their places in the organization.

Choice. People also need to feel they have choices. Whether the choice is as complex as designing new job descriptions or as basic as a choice to stay in the organization or not, choice provides people with some sense of control over their future. In fact, a research study (Froiland 1993) of 21 variables found a sense of personal power, one's choice over the use of time, resources, and workload, to be the only predictor of who stayed healthy in work situations. People without this sense of choice over their

professional lives were unable to cope with high amounts of pressure and change.

Hope. Finally, people desperately need hope. They need to believe that tomorrow, whether defined as the next day or the next few years, will bring energy, renewal, and harmony to their lives in the organization. They want to be believers in the organization and they want the organization to give them reason to be hopeful.

* * *

For leaders, the challenge of providing caring, clarity, choice, and hope might seem overwhelming. The needs of the employees are genuine and there are no strict recipes for success to follow. To offer some guidelines, Figure 3.2 on pages 59-60 lists a series of questions (Bridges 1991) to consider in responding to the call for caring, clarity, choice, and hope. The questions are organized according to the three phases of transition.

Leaders must be careful not to get so caught up in the issues involved in implementing change that they don't attend sufficiently to the human dimension. They must focus on the *people needs* of the organization. More specifically, leaders need to help people affected by change move from where they see themselves in relation to the change initiative to where they need to be in order to reach for new heights through the change process.

Figure 3.2 Caring, Clarity, Choice, and Hope Questions for Consideration by Leaders

CASTING OFF

Caring

- How have we acknowledged the losses with empathy?
- How have we permitted people to grieve and how have leaders publicly expressed their own feelings of loss?
- How have we found ways to help people compensate for their losses?

Clarity

- How have we given people accurate information, redundantly, in multiple ways?
- How have we clearly defined what is over and what is not?
- How have me made it clear that the endings are necessary to put the organization in a more productive position in the future?

TWEENER TIME

Caring

- How have we found ways to help people feel that they still belong to the organization?
- How have we demonstrated that people are still valued in the changing organization?
- How have we provided support, information, and resources to help people move ahead?
- How have we modeled authentic listening and empathy for people's concerns and worst fears?

Clarity

- How have we created temporary policies and procedures to get us through the Tweener Time?
- How have we structured communication and decision-making channels to keep open dialogue flowing during this uncertain period?
- How have we created temporary roles and reporting relationships amid uncertainty?

NEW HORIZONS

Caring

- How have we found new ways to reward people for making it through the Tweener Time and becoming energized again?
- How have we found ways to celebrate the new beginnings?
- How have we created strategies to allow people to confront their feelings about losses when the emotions reoccur?

Clarity

- How have we continued to clarify the purpose of the change and where we are in the journey?
- How have we modified and clarified our communication and decision-making channels in the new organization?
- How have we revised and communicated the policies, procedures, and priorities consistent with our new beginnings?

Figure 3.2 Caring, Clarity, Choice, and Hope Questions for Consideration by Leaders (continued)

CASTING OFF

Choice

- How have we developed a plan to give people a choice to take part of the past with them into the future?
- How have we given people a realistic choice not to participate in our future and, at the same time, helped them to create other choices in the new work environment?

Hope

- How have we given people sufficient reasons to see that letting go of the past will be worth the effort in the long run?
- How have we helped people come to terms with the reality that all new beginnings must involve endings?

TWEENER TIME

Choice

- How have we encouraged people to experiment and to take risks to create their own futures?
- How have we shifted from thinking about losses to thinking about how people can discover new ways of doing things?

Hope

- How have we conveyed our dreams for a new beginning?
- How have we developed concrete plans so people can see the hope being approached systematically?
- How have we provided special training programs so people have the skills to be successful in the new organization?

NEW HORIZONS

Choice

- How have we ensured that people have a voice in the roles they play in the new organization?
- How have we provided support for people to choose another work environment if they are not satisfied with their place in the new organization?

Hope

- How have we helped people see that the long-term gain was worth the short-term pain?
- How have we involved people in the crafting of a long-term vision?
- How have we positioned ourselves for a strong organizational culture?

PART FOUR

MAINTAINING PERSONAL RESILIENCE: LEADERS HELPING THEMSELVES

Even when organizational leaders do all of the "right" things helping others successfully adapt to change, they still pay a personal price. The truth is, leadership today is extremely painful. This section is devoted and dedicated to you, the organizational leaders, who spend so much time attending to the organization that you have little time left to help yourselves become more resilient. Acknowledging that it hurts to lead frees you to take the next step, which is understanding where it hurts and why.

The Anatomy of Leadership Pain

HEAD PAIN

The head pains usually come first. These are the pains related to thinking through what is in the best interests of the organization as you contemplate major organizational change. This is not only an extremely painful period, it's a time when the loneliness of leadership gets even lonelier. The long hours spent, on and off the job, privately agonizing over the merits of initiating significant change take their toll.

Those of you who have initiated change before and experienced the pain have a pretty keen sense of the organizational price paid. You know there's no escaping it. So you invest heavily in the head pain of thinking about the potential change from every conceivable angle. Is this the right thing to do? Do we have the organizational energy to pull it off? Am I the right leader for what needs to be done?

Once you have struggled intellectually with these issues and concluded that significant change is in the best interests of the organization, the pain in the head gets overtaken by another kind of pain—back pain.

BACK PAIN

Back pain refers to the anguish you feel when others blind-side you. Back pain may have the highest hurt index among the various pains of leadership. One reason for the extraordinary hurt of back pain can be traced to the element of surprise. Generally, you don't see it coming and

you don't always know who's causing it. Also, in contrast to other pains of leadership, back pain is external. It's one thing to bring pain on yourself. It's quite another to have others do it to you. The back pain becomes particularly acute when it's inflicted by those you trust the most. Betrayal is the lowest form of back pain and the sting lasts a long time.

As a leader, your best form of resilience when faced with back pain is to remain authentic in what you say and do. Stay true to your ethical convictions and your commitment to your organization. You will likely be tempted at times to show you can play dirty too, but the high road will always be your best choice.

HEART PAIN

No other pain of leadership lasts as long as the pain to the heart. It hurts deeply to bring pain into the lives of others as you ask individuals to abandon what they've known and done for many years. Leaving the security of old values and moving to the uncertainty of a fundamentally new way of doing business inevitably carries great pain. So why would you deliberately be hurtful to others and bring heart pain to yourself?

The short answer is that you don't have a choice. Your pain comes from knowing that what you do will be painful to others. You know also that if you don't move others to a different way of thinking and acting, the pain won't be any less. In fact, it will be greater for everyone.

So you lead others through the rather immediate pain of letting go of the old ways, suffering loss in the process, and ending up in a more rewarding place. Or you manage people who dodge the current pain, only later to encounter the delayed pain of holding on too long to the past. Even your own heart pain grows more excruciating if you fail to influence those in your organization to accept current pain to achieve potential gain in the future.

Leaders readily admit that the pains of leadership aren't confined to the head, the back, and the heart. There's the pain in the neck from all the annoying obstacles, the pain around the eyes from wearing blinders too long, and the pain in the foot from shooting yourself over stupid little mistakes. Although not all inclusive, such an anatomical view of pain graphically begins to describe the suffering all leaders feel when moving an organization to a new place. So what can you do to increase your resilience in the face of this pain?

Increasing Your Own Resilience

First, you must stop pretending that the pain doesn't exist, and acknowledge how much it hurts to lead. Imagine yourself attending, without apology or embarrassment, a workshop on The Pains of Leadership. Just showing up to discuss the pains of leadership would be an important first step. Open and frank discussion will make you stronger, not weaker. By unloading your accumulated baggage in a constructive way, you lighten the load for the future. You should give yourself permission to feel what others in the organization feel . . . anger, defensiveness, and rejection. You should also have strategies to work through these emotions constructively. More specifically, you need to confront the harsh reality that you, as leader, need the same things that everyone else needs in the organization: caring, clarity, choice, and hope. Try answering the following questions in Figure 4.1 to make sure you are fulfilling these needs.

Figure 4.1 Personal Caring, Clarity, Choice, and Hope

CARING

- How have I confronted signs of mourning in myself, and do I view them as natural?
- How have I given myself permission to take a temporary time-out from decisions and responsibilities that can wait?
- How have I carved out quiet times and stable places to give myself respite from the chaos I so often feel around and within me?

CLARITY

- What exactly is going to be different for me because of recent changes?
- What am I losing in the organizational changes?
- Am I clear about why I feel such a heavy burden on behalf of the organization, even though I believe the changes I have made were the "right" things to do?

CHOICE

- How am I pushing myself to break out of old ways of seeing my life and the options available to me?
- Have I set short-range objectives for myself to restore a sense of efficacy?
- Am I prepared to confront the statement, "Career, you've been good for me and good to me. Now I'm ready to try something different"?

HOPE

- How am I creating a new place for myself in light of the changes occurring in my life?
- Am I allowing myself to play with outrageous changes in my professional path, viewing them as real possibilities in the long run?
- Have I designed professional development opportunities for myself, so that I can stretch and grow into a "hopeful future"?

In closing, let's return once again to a point made in the opening section of this book. There is a distinction between optimism and hope. Optimism is the belief that things will turn out as you would like. Hope is the belief in yourself that causes you to fight for what is right and just, irrespective of the consequences. As a leader today, you may not be very optimistic, but you have ample reasons for hope.

My hope is that this book has provided you insights and strategies to support you in your fight for what is right and just in creating more resilient organizations.

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